

RELEASED IN PART
B1, 1.4(B), 1.4(D)

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ACTION ARA-01

INFO	LOG-00	ACDA-15	AMAD-01	CA-02	CIAE-00	C-01	DODE-00
	HA-09	H-01	INRE-00	INR-01	L-03	ADS-00	NSAE-00
	NSCE-00	OCS-06	OMB-01	PA-01	PM-01	PRS-01	P-01
	SNP-01	SP-01	SS-01	TRSE-00	T-01	USIE-00	/049W

-----0C9749 071651Z /38

P 071650Z FEB 92
FM AMEMBASSY CARACAS
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 8139
INFO USCINCSO QUARRY HEIGHTS PM
AMEMBASSY QUITO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 01 OF 02 CARACAS 01295

QUITO FOR GELBARD AND MCLEAN

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, CASC, AORC, MARR, VE
SUBJECT: [REDACTED]
COMMITTEE ON THE COUP ATTEMPT

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1. C - ENTIRE TEXT.

2. POLOFF MET WITH [REDACTED]

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[REDACTED] ON FEBRUARY 6 TO DISCUSS THE FEBRUARY 4 COUP
ATTEMPT. [REDACTED]

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COMMITTEE AND ONE OF [REDACTED]

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COMMENTED AS FOLLOWS.

WHY THE COUP ATTEMPT OCCURRED

3. [REDACTED] ATTRIBUTES THE COUP ATTEMPT PRIMARILY TO CAP'S
AND THE GOVERNMENT'S LOSS OF CONTACT WITH THE COUNTRY.
"CAP SHOULD DRASTICALLY CUT BACK ON HIS TRIPS ABROAD AND
SPEND MORE TIME HERE, BEING SEEN TO BE ATTENDING TO THE
COUNTRY'S PROBLEMS," [REDACTED] STRESSED. WHAT PLAYS WELL

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UNITED STATES DEPARTMENT OF STATE
REVIEW AUTHORITY: OSCAR J OLSON
CLASSIFICATION: CONFIDENTIAL REASON: 1.4(B), 1.4(D)
DECLASSIFY AFTER: 6 FEB 2017
DATE/CASE ID: 24 JUL 2006 200503206

UNCLASSIFIED

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ABROAD DOES NOT NECESSARILY PLAY WELL HERE, HE CONTINUED, AND FOREIGN ADULATION OF THE PRESIDENT DOES NOT MATTER TO THE AVERAGE VENEZUELAN, WHO PERCEIVES THAT CAP SPENDS HIS TIME GIVING THE NATIONAL PATRIMONY AWAY TO FOREIGNERS WHILE NATIVE VENEZUELAN GO HUNGRY. POLITICS IS A MATTER OF SYMOLS, [REDACTED] WENT ON, AND CAP HAS TO MAKE OF HIMSELF A SYMBOL OF CARING AND TO REESTABLISH "PERSONAL" CONTACT WITH THE COUNTRY. PERHAPS, AS IN THE "OLD DAYS," [REDACTED] CONTINUED, CAP COULD SET ASIDE SOME TIME EACH WEEK DURING WHICH TO RECEIVE THE COMMON MAN AND LISTEN TO HIS PROBLEMS.

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WHY THE COUP ATTEMPT FAILED

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4. [REDACTED] ATTRIBUTES THE COUP ATTEMPT'S FAILURE TO THE PLOTTERS' FANATICISM AND TUNNEL-VISION. "THEY NEEDED A POLITICAL ADVISOR," HE LAUGHED. THEIR IGNORANCE OF THE IMPORTANCE OF SECURING LINES OF COMMUNICATION AND TRANSPORTATION, ESPECIALLY THE MEDIA, ENSURED THEIR DEFEAT. ANOTHER IMPORTANT FACTOR IN THE COUP PLOTTERS'

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FAILURE WAS THE STRONG BACKING WHICH OTHER POLITICIANS, ESPECIALLY THE PARTY LEADERS, GAVE CAP. FOR INSTANCE, [REDACTED] NOTED, IF COPEI SECRETARY GENERAL EDUARDO FERNANDEZ HAD SAID ON NATIONAL TELEVISION IN THE EARLY MORNING HOURS OF FEBRUARY 4 WHAT RAFAEL CALDERA SAID IN CONGRESS LATER THAT DAY, THE COUP WOULD PROBABLY HAVE SUCCEEDED, AND CALDERA WOULD NEVER HAVE HAD THE CHANCE TO SPEAK OUT. (CALDERA APPEARED PARTIALLY TO JUSTIFY THE COUP ATTEMPT, IN HIS REMARKS IN CONGRESS, AS A NATURAL RESPONSE TO ECONOMIC HARDSHIP. WHAT [REDACTED] EVIDENTLY MEANT IN SAYING THIS WAS THAT THE PEOPLE WOULD HAVE INTERPRETED SUCH A COMMENTARY, WHILE THE OUTCOME OF THE COUP ATTEMPT WAS STILL IN DOUBT, AS A CALL TO TAKE TO THE STREETS IN SUPPORT OF THE REBELS, AND THEY MIGHT HAVE DONE SO.) [REDACTED] CHARACTERIZED CALDERA'S CONGRESSIONAL COMMENTS AS "POLITICALLY ASTUTE" IN THAT THEY REFLECTED THE ATTITUDE OF THE AVERAGE VENEZUELAN. AS A RESULT OF CALDERA'S CONGRESSIONAL INTERVENTION, HE IS UNDOUBTEDLY THE "MOST POPULAR" POLITICIAN IN VENEZUELA AT THE MOMENT,

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POLITICAL EFFECTS OF THE COUP ATTEMPT

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5. [REDACTED] DOES NOT EXPECT MAJOR POLITICAL CHANGES AS A RESULT OF THE COUP ATTEMPT. COPEI, HE SAID, WOULD CONTINUE TO SUPPORT THE ECONOMIC REFORM PROGRAM IN THE FRAMEWORK OF A CONSTRUCTIVE, LOYAL OPPOSITION. [REDACTED] EXPECTS THE GOVERNMENT TO DO LIKEWISE. HE HOPES THAT THE GOVERNMENT WILL IMPROVE ITS ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE REST OF THE COUNTRY AND TO ADMINISTER SOCIAL PROGRAMS

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INTENDED TO ALLEVIATE POPULAR PLIGHT. [REDACTED] ALSO HOPES THAT THE PARTIES WILL DISCIPLINE THOSE IN THEIR RANKS GUILTY OF CORRUPTION AND PAY MORE ATTENTION TO COPING WITH NATIONAL PROBLEMS. IF AN "OUTSIDER" PRESIDENTIAL CANDIDATE WITH LT. COL. CHAVEZ' CHARISMA AND "ANTI-POLITICS" PLATFORM WERE TO EMERGE, [REDACTED] HE WOULD BE OVERWHELMINGLY ELECTED.

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IMMEDIATE PROBLEM: DEALING WITH THE MILITARY

6. [REDACTED] IS UNCOMFORTABLE WITH THE WAY IN WHICH THE GOVERNMENT HAS BEEN HANDLING THE MILITARY. HE FINDS IT "UNBELIEVABLE" THAT NOTHING WAS DONE TO DETER LT. COL.

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AMEMBASSY QUITO

C O N F I D E N T I A L SECTION 02 OF 02 CARACAS 01295

QUITO FOR GELBARD AND MCLEAN

E.O. 12356: DECL:OADR
TAGS: PREL, PGOV, CASC, AORC, MARR, VE
SUBJECT: [REDACTED]
CHAVEZ FRIAS AND HIS COLLEAGUES DESPITE INFORMATION ABOUT
THEIR COUP-PLOTTING HAVING BEEN AVAILABLE FOR 8 YEARS.

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EFFECT ON CONGRESS

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7. [REDACTED] POOH-POOHED SPECULATION THAT THE COUP ATTEMPT
WOULD CAUSE LENGTHY DELAYS IN CONGRESSIONAL CONSIDERATION
OF PENDING LEGISLATION. THE NEXT DAY, HE SAID, CONGRESS
WOULD CREATE A SPECIAL COMMISSION TO INVESTIGATE THE COUP
ATTEMPT. MEANWHILE, CONGRESS' REGULAR WORK WOULD CONTINUE
APACE. AFTER THE NATURAL DISTRACTION OF THE FIRST FEW
DAYS, [REDACTED] CONGRESS' RHYTHM WOULD RETURN TO
NORMAL. SKOL

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